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Talking Points for the ADCI

27 March 1987

Collapse of Qadhafi's Chad Campaign

Following three battles between 19 and 22 March, Chadian Government forces overran Ouadi Doum, Libya's largest garrison in northern Chad.

-- Habre's swift seizure of tactical opportunities, together with Libya's tactical blunders and poor morale negated Libya's advantage in numbers and firepower.

-- Preliminary reporting from the [] suggests that 1700 Libyans were killed, wounded, or captured at Ouadi Doum. The Libyans have suffered 3,000 to 4,000 casualties in Chad since November. []

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Following the collapse of Ouadi Doum, Libyan forces began retreating from their other southern garrisons.

-- Small Libyan garrisons in the Tibesti mountains continue to be manned, but we view them as untenable once Chadian President Habre focuses his offensive in that region.

-- We believe the Libyans will soon pull back to the Aozou Strip, which they have long claimed as Libyan territory. []

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Libya's humiliation in Chad, combined with the heavy casualties, is likely to aggravate a political climate in Libya already conducive to coup plotting because of the declining standard of living and the unpopularity of Qadhafi's radical political programs.


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-- We believe Qadhafi will try unsuccessfully to deflect blame by finding military scapegoats for the defeat and exaggerating French and US support to the Chadian forces.

-- If plots already exist, the Chad debacle may catalyze a coup attempt. If plotting is not yet in train, we believe it soon will be.

-- The timing of any coup attempt remains difficult to predict. Plotters probably will continue to find it difficult to penetrate Qadhafi's pervasive security. 


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On the foreign scene, Libyan defeats give Qadhafi new cause to sponsor terrorist attacks against a variety of targets.


-- Qadhafi may accelerate his targeting of Libyan dissidents because of their establishment of a radio station and other recent activities in N'Djamena.  some Libyan surrogates may be already in place in Benin preparing terrorist operations against Chad.

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-- Terrorism against French and perhaps US interests also is likely.

-- Qadhafi has little to lose by attacking French interests directly, but would probably prefer that surrogates strike US targets for fear of provoking another military confrontation with Washington. 

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Tripoli might try to use terrorism against the French as leverage to negotiate a French commitment to withhold support for a Chadian effort to retake Aozou. 

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SUBJECT: Talking Points for the ADCI -- Collapse of Qadhafi's Chad Campaign

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